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ABSTRACT

The constant state of "simply making it through the day" for many beginning teachers affects their physical and mental well-being, and impacts their decision to stay in the field of education. Given the seriousness of teacher burnout, it behooves school systems to provide an induction experience for beginning teachers that will contribute to their development as a professional and to their intent to stay in the field. This qualitative study examined the initial experiences of middle-school beginning teachers through interviews with principals, mentors, and new teachers, and through classroom observations of the new teachers. Its focus involved finding out what role administrators can play in the successful induction of new teachers. Findings show that time, observations, subject matter, and schedules (T.O.S.S.) are components administrators have control over to provide a smooth transition for the first-year teacher. It is recommended that further research be conducted to confirm or disconfirm this study's findings, that principals take an active role in the induction of new teachers and refrain from relegating all aspects of induction to the mentor, and that principals should embrace the elements of T.O.S.S. as they formulate their induction policies. (Contains 36 references.) (RT)

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T.O.S.S.It to the New Teacher: The Principal's Role in the Induction Process

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What is the most rigorous law of our being? Growth. No smallest atom of our moral, mental, or physical structure can stand still a year. It grows— it must grow; nothing can prevent it.

– Mark Twain (1835–1910) "Consistency," paper, read in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1884

Introduction

The constant state of "simply making it through the day" for many beginning teachers affects more than the teacher's physical and mental well being. The classroom learning environment and the achievement of educational goals as a teacher struggles to survive impacts the teacher's apathy, cynicism, and classroom climate. New teachers are particularly vulnerable as they are often assigned to schools known for their tough and stressful conditions, schools that the veteran teachers choose to avoid. Given the seriousness of the state of teacher burnout as demonstrated by several studies in the past twenty years (Anderson and Iwanicki, 1984; Berg, 1994; Byrne, 1994; Gold, Roth, Wright, and Michael, 1991; Guglielmi and Tatrow, 1998; McLaughlin, Pfeifer, Swantson-Owens, and Yee, 1986; Schwab, Jackson, and Schuler, 1986), it behooves school systems to provide an induction experience for beginning teachers which will not only contribute to their development as a professional but one which will contribute to their intent to stay in the field of education.

Blair-Larsen (1998) contends that the more problems new teachers encounter, the more likely they will leave the education profession. Factors that influence a teacher's decision to remain in teaching often occur in the initial years of teaching. Thus, the induction experience can set the tone and quality of the novice's tenure in education (Chapman, 1984). A study by Chapman (1984) pointed out that "the single strongest predictor of retention was initial commitment to teaching" (p.655). Schools which provide opportunities to develop professional competence through a system of support, professional growth, and reflective practice may find job satisfaction increasing which logically will lead to teacher retention. T.O.S.S. is an acronym for those miscellaneous items which can have a bearing on the quality of the new teacher's induction experience. The elements of time, observations, subject matter, and schedule are all under the auspices of the school's administration; thus, the principal, in an awareness of these components, can provide for a smooth transition for the first year teacher.

For purposes of this paper, induction will be defined as that process by which a beginning teacher is assisted in the growth and development as a professional in the work of teaching. A beginning teacher is defined as a novice instructor with less than three cumulative years of teaching. This qualitative study examined the initial experiences of middle school beginning teachers through interviews with principals, mentors, and new teachers and from classroom observations of the new teachers. Findings from this study lead to the conclusion that T.O.S.S. can contribute to a more efficacious transition from novice to veteran.

Perspectives

The Needs and Challenges of New Teachers

Odell (1986) notes that there are two ways to approach establishing an induction

support program. The first is a theoretical approach where theoretical deductions help explain what would best help new teachers. However, no single theory has been upheld as a best practice perspective, so choosing one would involve a hit-or-miss proposition. The second approach is a functional one; that is, the best determination of what is needed in an induction program should come from the new teachers themselves in terms of their needs for assistance.

Veenman (1984) did just that. In a survey of teachers Veenman asked what was the greatest difficulty faced by teachers. Teachers reported challenges such as discipline, student assessment, difficulties with parents, sufficient materials for instruction, inadequate preparation time, and getting along with colleagues. In preparation for any induction program school systems can best serve the needs of their new teachers by first determining what these needs are. While "target lists", such as those compiled by Veenman, may be an adequate starting point, to best support beginning teachers, induction programs should be specifically geared to the system and its teachers.

Considerations in the Preparation of Induction Programs

Previous Learning. In a review of thirteen studies of first-year or beginning teachers, Kagan (1992) found the common theme that in forming images of their students, teachers had to draw on their own experiences as students. As the year progresses, teachers acquire knowledge of pupils, which they can generalize to an entire class. This knowledge helps to modify the images of themselves as teachers. Initially, the focus is on self as the beginning teacher begins to reconstruct an image of self as a teacher. Only when this image is resolved, does the attention shift to design of instruction and what pupils are learning.

Context factors in this process include the degree of autonomy afforded by the principal and the personal relationship between the novice and the mentor (Kagan, 1992). This view is consistent with that advocated by cognitive psychologists; that is, that new information is related to previously learned information. Cognitive approaches emphasize modeling, observing others, demonstrations, and the construction of images as part of the learning process (Fincher, 1998). Moreover, this view affirms Piaget's discussion of schemata and the idea that cognitive development results from interactions in the physical and social environment (Ormrod, 1990).

The Role of the Principal. While much of the literature centers on the importance of mentors in the beginning teachers' experience, principals are arguably central figures as well. A study conducted by Brock and Grady (1998) examined the role of the principal in the induction of novice teachers. While the results of the study indicated that principals and new teachers share common concerns regarding the initial experience, principals overlooked a key component identified as crucial by the new teachers – the expectations of the principal for the new teacher and the beginning teachers' need for year long assistance. As the person instrumental in the hiring and evaluation of the new teachers, the beginning teacher is anxious to fulfill the principal's expectations. Lacking this, the new teacher can feel frustrated and abandoned. Realizing this, it is fitting that principals consider their role in the induction process.

Planning an induction program at the school level must include frequent and productive interaction between the principal and each new teacher. Understanding that induction programs will ultimately benefit the principal and school as a whole by working to develop

a teacher who intends to stay in the field of education will be reflected in the design of the program itself. As a part of this design, principals must take on the role of instructional leader by engaging the new teacher in discussions of the practice of teaching, thus, assisting them in their professional growth and their indoctrination as a colleague. Moreover, principals can end the sense of isolation through frequent classroom visits as well as increasing efficacy through timely and constructive feedback (Hope, 1999).

There are a number of other ways principals can ensure that the new teacher's first year is a productive one. While mentors are "assigned" to the new teacher, the principal can foster collegial relationships with other faculty and staff members. Accessibility to the principal is also a key ingredient. Knowing that "the door is always open" can be a great comfort to the beginner. Furthermore, principals should be ever mindful of opportunities to enhance a new teacher's professional development. Workshops, conferences, and other opportunities to gain additional skills can serve the school as much as the teacher. The principal can help maximize success for the new teacher through the classes and students that are assigned by the principal to the new teacher. Finally, one of the greatest fears of the novice is the dreaded evaluation. Principals can do much to alleviate this fear by stressing the evaluation as a means of improvement, rather than a means of criticism (Hope, 1999).

Methods and Procedures

As a research strategy, Yin (1994) calls the case study method a "comprehensive research strategy" (p.13), a method which investigates a phenomenon in its natural context. While Yin (1994) cites the case study as useful in the study of organizational processes, Patton (1990) notes that case studies as qualitative methodology may be preferred when unusual failures or unusual successes are being documented. Moreover, the holistic nature of case studies allows for an overall picture of the phenomena under study.

Case study research examines a phenomenon and then uses a case to explain a particular instance of that phenomenon (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Researchers employ the case study to describe the phenomenon and search for themes as features of the case, to explain the phenomenon through patterns, or to evaluate in order to make judgments about the phenomenon (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). This study produced large quantities of data which were best examined and understood with case study methodology in order to accurately describe and explain the role of the principal in the induction experiences of beginning teachers in differentially effective middle schools. In this way, the findings from the study were better confirmed.

Case Study Design

Sampling Design. The research design called for purposeful outlier sampling using intensity sampling strategy (Patton, 1990). This strategy involves carefully choosing a sample which provides "information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely (but not extremely)" (Patton, 1990, p. 171). Intensity sampling is superior to extreme case sampling because deviant cases will likely distort the "phenomenon of interest." In other words, extreme case sampling may provide information that is so unusual that the findings may be disputed (Patton, 1990).

The question that guided this research examined the principals's role in induction in

differentially effective middle schools; thus, a sample which documents an intense manifestation of the effectiveness of the middle school, either more effective or less effective, will reveal the most valuable information regarding the processes in these schools which will result in a positive or negative socialization experience.

Stringfield (1994) emphasizes the importance of outlier sampling for those studies seeking to understanding extraordinary events, calling the detailed outlier study a "most efficient research design" when questioning "what sets an exemplar apart" (p. 73). The efficiency lay in the ability to detail descriptions in the area of interest, thereby adding a richness to the overall study.

This study will examine outliers which are more effective middle schools and those which are less effective. Using both positive and negative outliers allows for maximum contrasts in the processes of the schools, a design strength which Stringfield (1994) posits "allows maximum differentiating power in the most efficient design" (p. 74). The disadvantage to this design is that typical schools, those which are the majority of schools in the total population, are not studied. However, by studying the processes in outlier schools, information gleaned will allow typical schools to more efficiently focus on those processes needing attention in their particular context.

School Effectiveness Index. Each year schools in Louisiana are required to administer the state's LEAP 21 test. There are two components to the test, English Language Arts and Mathematics (school year 2000-2001 inaugurated the Accountability Cycle 2, where the SPS included all four LEAP 21 tests; that is English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies). The SPS, calculated annually by the Louisiana Department of Education, is determined by combining results from four index scores with their corresponding weights. The formula for the calculation of the SPS follows:

School Performance Score	= *The Sum of:*	
LEAP 21 index score	X	60%
Iowa Test index score	X	30%
Attendance index	X	5%
Dropout index	X	5%

The index scores for the LEAP 21 and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills were derived through conversion. Scores not included in the conversion were for students who were expelled, transferred to another school or received a grade reassignment. The conversion resulted in a listing of schools and their individual school effectiveness index (SEI) for a consecutive two year period, as illustrated in Table 1.

Establishing the School Effectiveness Index. Before a sample could be chosen, a school effectiveness index (SEI) needed to be assigned to the middle schools in Louisiana. The SEIs were derived through a linear regression procedure whereby the criterion variable, in this study the school performance score (SPS), was regressed onto three predictor variables, which for this study were percent of students in poverty, percent of minority students, and percent of special education students (Sammons, 1999; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993). The three independent variables (percent of students in poverty, percent of minority students, and percent of special education students) accounted for 66.5% of the variance in the dependent variable (1998-99 school performance scores) (Yuan, 2000).

The result of this regression was a set of both actual and predicted scores for every K-8 school in Louisiana. The difference between the actual score and the predicted score was

the residual score, either positive or negative. The residual scores served as the school effectiveness index for this study.

Table 1. Conversion of Student Scores to School Index Scores.

Students' raw scores *	→ converted to →	Students' scale scores **
Students' scale scores	→ converted to →	Students' z scores **
Students' z scores	→ converted to →	School's z scores **
School's z scores	→ converted to →	School's index score**
School's index score	→ converted to →	School's SPS score**

* Raw scores on CRT mathematics and English Language Arts are for 4th and 8th grade LEAP 21 exam and on NRT total battery raw scores for 5th, 6th, and 7th grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

** Scores are for each subject area and grade level.

Source: Louisiana Department of Education, Office of Management and Finance, Division of Planning, Analysis, and Information Services, Planning and Analysis Section, 2000.

Adjusted Scores. Research studies of school effects (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993) have used the strategy of adjusted scores in their study design. This strategy addresses the issue of internal validity in order to ensure that the study is designed to measure what it was intended to measure, while eliminating any extraneous variables that might affect the outcome. Thus, variables which might be related to student achievement, other than the school processes under study, should be accounted for (Teddlie, Reynolds, & Sammons, 2000).

Variables controlled for in the present study are those related to student background; that is, SES, special education, and ethnicity. SES refers to the income and educational background of the students' families. Data from student SES are often not maintained by schools and when data are available, they are often not accurate (Freeman, 1997). In the present study, SES is determined through data related to the number of students enrolled in each school's free and reduced lunch program. To enroll in the program, parents must produce information related to the family income. A school which has a high percentage of students enrolled in the free/reduced price lunch program will likely also have a high percentage of students living in poverty; therefore, the socioeconomic status of the school will likely be lower. For purposes of the regression analysis, the SES of each school was determined by the number of students enrolled in the free/reduced price lunch program at the school divided by the total number of students enrolled in the school (S. Kochan, personal communication, January 4, 2001).

Ethnicity and special education percentages were also predictor variables utilized in the regression analysis (Sammons, 1999; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993). The ethnicity variable

was determined by the number of minority students at each school divided by the total enrollment at each school. The special education variable was determined in like manner. The total number of gifted and talented students in the school was divided by the total enrollment of students. Data indicating the total number of minority students and gifted and talented students were received through the Louisiana Student Information System, which is a self-report system, but also an audited system as part of the Minimum Foundation Program school funding system (S. Kochan, personal communication, January 4, 2001).

Sample Selection. Residual scores were received from the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of Management and Finance, Division of Planning, Analysis, and Information Services, Planning and Analysis Section (Yuan, 2000). This study examined only those schools with some combination of middle school grades (i.e., 4-8, 5-8, 6-8, or 7-8). In order to standardize the residual scores, the sample of interest (all middle schools), were extracted from the total sample. The effectiveness of middle schools was determined on the basis of a sample using all schools in the state; therefore, the regression analyses utilized by the Louisiana Department of Education were not recalculated. Instead, using the SPSS statistics program, the residual scores of the middle schools were standardized into z scores ($\mu = 0$, $\sigma = 1$). This procedure yielded a list of middle schools with standard scores which ranged from +3.07 to -3.07.

Several considerations came into play when choosing the schools which would serve as the sample for this study. In examining the distribution of residual scores for the school year (SY) 1998-99 data and looking for matched pairs of schools, it was determined that residual scores of ±.67 yielded a sample large enough to select an adequate number of more effective/less effective schools. Residual scores of ±.67 represent the upper 25% of the distribution and the lower 25% of the distribution (Lomax, 1992). The upper and lower 25% of the distribution constitute an appropriate definition of an "intensity sample." The upper and lower 25% of the distribution also approximates cut-off points used to determine more effective/less effective schools in prior school effectiveness research (e.g., Lang, 1991; Purkey & Smith, 1982; Scheerens, 1992). Following this line of thinking, middle schools with an SEI of ±.67 were examined for possible inclusion in the study sample. The final sample included five matched pairs of middle schools, two pairs in the same school district and three pairs in contiguous districts. The final sample of five matched pairs of middle schools is found in Table 2.

A written request was made to the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction in each school district in the sample. This request outlined the research, its purpose, what schools would be visited, which parties within each school would be contacted and the method of that contact (i.e., interview, observation,and/or survey response). The request to conduct research also included where and in what manner the findings of the research study would be dispersed. All schools in Table 2 agreed to participate.

Table 2. Matched Pair Sample for the Study.

Pair	School	District	Size	Minority	SES	z score
1	Polar Flight	Northside	986	29.8	54.6	+.72
	Blackbird	Northside	543	16.7	36.7	-.71
2	Barnstorming	Waterside	558	10.3	31.3	+1.24
	Mir	Riverside	715	14.7	37.6	-1.86
3	Cargo	Eastside	400	14	42	+1.79
	Kamikaze	Westside	458	12.8	49.8	-1.65
4	Concorde	Southside	687	75.9	44	+.94
	Tupelov	Southside	686	67.2	42	-1.52
5	Stealth	Northside	940	54	56.5	+1.30
	Tailspin	Southside	697	67	51	-1.98

Data Collection

Data collection commenced in order to answer the question: What role can administrators play in the successful induction of new teachers? Phase One involved the collection of interview data from the middle school principals and the beginning teachers' mentors. The purpose of these interviews was to elicit information regarding the individual middle school's induction process and the role of the principal and mentor in this process. The principal and the mentor gave a perspective of the induction process different from that of the beginning teacher, the principal from the monitoring role and the mentor in the role of assistance.

Phase Two involved the collection of interview data from the beginning teachers who volunteered for the study. Beginning teachers were interviewed to educe information regarding the needs, challenges, rewards, and successes of the initial years of teaching. Teachers were probed to reveal processes within the school which might account for their views regarding the induction experience and their perception of the principal's role in this experience. The data from both the principal and mentor interviews as well as the teacher interviews were analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The data were then unitized, categorized, and put into the database to extract both a priori and emerging themes.

Findings

Analysis of all schools in the sample took place in two cycles. Interviews of principals, mentors, and beginning teachers were first unitized and categorized (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) with a priori themes by school context. General a priori themes included mentoring

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assistance and administrative monitoring. Through the process of analysis, the additional theme of the role of the principal emerged that was manifested across cases and contexts.

Monitoring by the Principal

Like official mentors, administrators, most often the principal, are also required to monitor instruction of the beginning teachers. All schools reported fulfilling this expectation. However, the quality of the monitoring varied by school context.

Principals in less effective schools were more likely to carry out the minimum number of required observations for the district and state. Observations at the less effective schools were more likely to fulfill state requirements rather than to facilitate instructional effectiveness. Two other aspects of monitoring, quality of feedback and attitude toward the state assessment program, were manifested in the study.

Three of the five principals in less effective schools only gave positive feedback, as reported by the new teachers. Observations were followed by encouraging words, rather than a critique. Some feedback from observations came in the form of pep talks. One principal did not provide feedback at all. His view was that if something needed to be addressed he would do so immediately. He monitored by "no news is good news."

Monitoring in more effective schools included frequent visits to teacher's classrooms, both formal and informal. Principals in more effective schools were more likely to advocate "walk through" visits, also called "pop ins" or "popcorns." These visits lasted from one minute to ten minutes, with a cursory but thorough look at lesson plans and student engagement. Feedback was immediate and, likely, in writing. New teachers, often initially intimidated, grew comfortable with these visits. Beginners at more effective schools reported inviting the principal to visit their classes and students anticipated "showing off" for the principal. Feedback from one administrator took the form of reflection, a method the new teachers appreciated as one which motivated them to objectively view their instruction.

Principals at more effective schools were also more likely to be viewed as open to new ideas and new instructional techniques. One principal utilized school wide faculty email to both solicit and share ideas from teachers. Another principal operated through shared decision making, a policy which empowered the new teachers to view themselves as professionals as well as instilling them with confidence in their abilities.

The Role of the Principal

Analysis of the role of the principal in the socialization experience resulted in a clear delineation between more effective and less effective schools. Those principals in the more effective schools are *focused*. Those in the less effective schools are either *frenzied, fractured, or floaters*.

Across school contexts, principals in more effective schools rarely sit behind their desks. These principals move down the hallways, into classrooms, and out on to the playground. Their focus is on every aspect of the school, ensuring that every member of the school community is also focused on the mission of increasing student achievement in an orderly atmosphere. During transition time between classes, these administrators are in the hallways monitoring and greeting, while, at the same time, ensuring that students are moving rapidly to their next learning experience.

Principals in effective schools are focused on bringing together a committed faculty through recruiting or through interview techniques geared to this selection. Input from other faculty ensures that a common vision for potential faculty exists. Once employed, principals in more effective schools go beyond the minimal instructional monitoring required by the state. Their monitoring is frequent, often unannounced, and invariably followed by thought-provoking feedback for the novice.

Beginning teachers in effective schools clearly understand the emphasis placed on effective instruction by their principals. New and creative instructional strategies are encouraged, as long as the end result is focused on an increase in student achievement. Beginning teachers understand that they are a valued part of the school community because their input and ideas are accepted and often shared with other faculty. Support from these principals includes, but often extends beyond, social support. Teachers in effective schools are supported in their decisions regarding classroom management and challenges from the public.

The focus on excellence in the classroom permeates throughout the schools and in to the surrounding community. Beginning teachers in these schools enlarge their efforts as they, too, focus on the vision of the principal for their students. As the novice teachers are socialized into a school culture of excellence in education, they, like their principal, are "all about the kids," with a focus on achievement.

Principals in less effective schools fell in to three categories: the *floater*, the *frenzied*, and the *fractured*. As they fell, so did their beginning teachers.

The *floater* in this study was a friendly administrator, easy going and well liked. The *floater* "goes with the flow" and, according to the novices, is a "laid back" manager. Freely admitting that he has no say in the hiring of teachers, he accepts the faculty that the school district sends to him without question. The school somewhat operates itself, with no bells and a very powerful mentor, one who, according to one new teacher, handles the incorrigible students that the principal can not handle. The other *floater* principal drifted in to school in the morning with no explanation, greeting everyone and in no hurry to begin the work day.

The majority of the faculty appear to personally like the *floater* but few view him/her as a leader. Facets of the socialization experience which are normally viewed as important are overlooked by this principal, such as forgetting to assign a mentor to a new teacher or limiting classroom visits to once a semester, often with no follow up feedback. Frequently seen at the after school "Miller Time" in the commons area of the school, one of these principals is observed telling stories and laughing at the end of the school day, rather than monitoring students in the bus area. Another *floater* had a matronly air and the beginners turned to her, rather than the mentor, for social support. Novices felt comfortable working for her.

For those beginning teachers who desire an instructional leader, the *floater* is a source of frustration. Searching out instruction and management advice from colleagues, some novices diligently work while observing that other novices teach only for the state assessment, spending the remainder of their class periods "behind their desk counting out money for their fundraiser." These beginners believe their principal "lets things slip by" and therefore, conversations and behavior unbecoming to a professional educator become the norm. For some of the new teachers, their frustration quickly grows into resentment. Other new teachers become a part of the culture of drifting and begin to float through the

year as well.

The *frenzied* principal has a diametrically opposed work style. In a constant state of upheaval, she is always behind, always in crisis, always on edge. The rigid posture and clenched jaw are physical manifestations of the pressurized atmosphere in which this principal perceives she works.

Managing with an external locus of control, the *frenzied* principal calls teacher selection a "crap shoot" and is never certain whether a teacher will continue in employment, once hired. Suspicious of the applicants, she accepts that the truth will be stretched during the selection interview. Induction of novices is delegated to the mentor, a teacher overwhelmed by yearbook advising and special education lead teacher duties.

Beginning teachers either like or fear the *frenzied* administrator but the atmosphere of pressure and suffocating duties transfer to the new teacher. The novices who work in this atmosphere become acculturated to living in a pressure suit and, likewise, are thrown in to frenzies by paperwork and events out of the norm. Under the guidance of the *frenzied* principal, the school community becomes one which is acted upon, rather than acting.

A third type of principal which emerged from this study was the *fractured* administrator. Both of the fractured principals were employed by the same school district, a district which has experienced several breaks in the recent past, including but not limited to, white flight, superintendent turnover, teacher dissatisfaction, and dismal local funding. These problems in a fractured district may have filtered down to the office of the principals, who also appeared broken by problems in their schools.

The schools which were led by *fractured* principals were characterized by little discipline; therefore, time which the principals spent disciplining students was time taken away from monitoring and supporting beginning teachers. Classrooms in these schools had little or no instruction taking place and in those classes where teachers were attempting instruction, students were often observed disengaged or off task.

Schools managed by the *fractured* principals had the largest numbers of new teachers in the study. These new teachers reported little support from administrators or from colleagues. Communication was poor between the teachers and the administrators with teachers often discovering that they were uninformed about deadlines or upcoming events. Moreover, the viewpoint of the teachers and the *fractured* administrator were inconsistent; thus, little data triangulation was found in these schools. Many of these new teachers were teaching out of their area of expertise and more uncertified teachers were found at these schools than at any other.

Principals and Teacher Selection

Brock and Grady (1998) identified the principal as a crucial component in the initial experience of new teachers. From teacher selection to the promotion of effective instructional strategies, the principal is key in the socialization process. This study affirmed that conclusion.

An integral part of the process is the initial selection of the teacher. Principals in this study who believed in the mission of educating all children to their fullest potential chose teachers also committed to this vision, a belief confirmed by previous research (Westbrook, 1998). Principals in less effective schools often felt removed from the process of selection by accepting those teachers, both certified and uncertified, who were sent by the district's

central office. Though not cited as part of a formal induction program, principals at more effective schools had frequent and productive interaction with the new teacher. This interaction included formal and informal class visits, reflective feedback, discussion of the practice of teaching, and assistance in professional and personal growth, all elements which follow research findings by Hope (1999). Administrators in this study whose priorities rested with school wide discipline problems, paperwork, or promulgating a culture of isolation helped to maximize the new teacher's fears and sense of inadequacy, both which translated to their instruction and thus, to the students. As Schein notes (1992) principals convey their priorities by what they pay attention to. This study found through observations that less effective schools had more instructional time interruptions, less emphasis on higher order thinking skills, more discipline problems, and lower expectations for student learning. The new teachers in these schools received the message from the principal and the overall school organization that student learning and the work of teaching were not priorities.

Conclusions

Findings from this study point out four areas, within the control of the principal, which can determine the success or failure of the induction experience for new teachers. T.O.S.S. is an acronym for those miscellaneous items, which can have a bearing on the quality of the new teacher's induction experience. The elements of time, observations, subject matter and schedule are all under the auspices of the school's administration; thus, the principal, in an awareness of these components, can provide for a smooth transition for the first year teachers.

Time is something new teachers never have enough of – time to plan, time to grade, and time to fill out what appears to be mounds of paperwork. Principals might allow new teachers structured time with mentors so that time for reflective practice can be initiated and used to advantage. This structured time will make challenges easier to face and offer opportunities for improvement. In this way, time for the day-to-day procedures may not seem so limited.

Observations can be a double benefit for beginners. By assuring the new teacher that the purpose of observations is to help the new teacher improve, rather than to criticize, the principal may find the new teacher welcoming his/her entrance into the classroom. However, new teachers should be allowed to observe as well. Granting time for the beginner to observe veteran teachers can expand the new teacher's repertoire of instructional methodology and give the new teacher an opportunity to see a veteran handle the challenges that students present in the normal course of a day.

Subject matter has the potential to be a major source of stress for the new teacher. At the beginning of the teaching career, the novice may have a low sense of efficacy regarding the subject matter in which the new teacher is trained. However, many new teachers are also assigned the "dangling" classes; that is, the classes for which one section requires a teacher assignment. Giving classes outside of the teacher's certification to the beginner gives that teacher an additional load to carry at a time when anything additional is detrimental to mental and physical well being.

Schedules of the new teachers can be facilitated to pave the way for a smooth first year. Limiting the number of lesson plans, scheduling like plans back to back, and scheduling

planning periods (or auxiliary classes for elementary teachers) to forego long periods without a break for the new teacher will help to alleviate other stressors faced by the new teacher. Principals normally construct the school's master schedule and could consider beginning teacher's schedule as part of the administration's role in the induction of the new teacher.

Realities of What an Induction Program Can Not Do

Designers of induction programs should be aware of the limitations of the programs, particularly at the goal setting stage. Being realistic at the beginning of the process might forego some frustration when a carefully planned induction does not reap all the benefits initially hoped for. Huling-Austin (1986) offers a reality check for those who plan to implement an all encompassing program.

If a goal of the program is to improve practice, it is wise to bear in mind that there are no quick fixes. Becoming an effective teacher is an ongoing process with a need for coaching and support throughout. Moreover, just as schools and their students differ, so do beginning teachers. The level of support and coaching required for some novices may not be required for all (Huling-Austin, 1986). Success of a program is relative to the flexibility with which it is implemented.

If new teachers are not successful during the first year, designers of the induction program should not be ready to place blame on the program. The school context can be a major component in a new teacher's level of functioning. Was the new teacher assigned to teach classes outside of the teacher's major discipline? Were the new teacher's classes overloaded? Was the number of lesson preparations great? Was the climate of the school non-conducive to effective teaching? School level problems which would present difficulties for veteran teachers will likewise present difficulties for new teachers and induction programs should not expected to resolve these difficulties (Huling-Austin, 1986),

While new teacher support is an important component of any induction program, caution regarding this support should be taken. Support should be offered to foster professional growth and to socialize the teacher into the school. The purpose of support should not be used to "make a teacher feel good", particularly if support is offered for a job poorly done. Making a teacher feel good about ineffective performance, simply to raise their esteem is misleading and the harm far outweighs the good (Huling-Austin, 1986). Clarification of types of support in the induction program is necessary if the program is to be effective.

Recommendations

Data analysis from this study, along with the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, lead to the recommendations presented here. Recommendations are categorized by recommendations for research and recommendations for practice.

<u>Recommendations for Research</u>

- Additional research at the middle school level is warranted to confirm or disconfirm the findings from this study. Studies which replicate this research or extend this research will add to the field of SER and to studies of induction at the middle school level.

- Additional research in teacher socialization at the elementary and secondary levels is needed to broaden this area of school effectiveness research. As this study was limited to schools at the middle level, generalizations to the secondary or elementary level should be used cautiously. Research specifically targeting the secondary or elementary school level will yield findings of the principal's role in teacher socialization research across a broader spectrum of SER.

Recommendations for Practice

Future school practice should consider the following:

- Principals should take an active role in the induction of new teachers, including frequent discussion, monitoring, and feedback regarding professional practice. Fulfilling the minimum requirements as mandated by the state will result in a minimally proficient staff. Principals who take seriously their role as instructional leader can do much to shape an effective teaching staff in a school climate geared to learning.
- Principals should refrain from relegating all aspects of new teacher induction to the mentor. Principals are a vital part of the socialization experience and should not remove themselves from the process. Brock and Grady (1998) point out that principal expectations of the new teacher is a vital component of the socialization process. Frequent and meaningful contact with the beginner will enable the principal to help the novice become a productive part of the school organization.
- When possible and/or notwithstanding a shortage of teachers in the area, principals should assign mentors to new teachers based on like subject matter and provide mutual time for the mentor and new teacher to meet. By doing so, mentors will have a closer working relationship with the novice throughout the initial year.
- Principals should refrain from assigning outside duties to mentors in order that the new teacher can become the priority for the mentor. Limiting outside duties will allow the mentor time which can be devoted to the new teacher.
- Principals should attempt to embrace the elements of T.O.S.S. as they formulate their induction policies. Doing so may provide a smoother transition for the novice into the school setting.

Summary and Conclusions

The design and implementation of induction programs should be carefully and thoroughly thought through. Consideration of the needs and challenges faced by the beginning teachers in the system where they will teach is a necessary first step. Only by meeting the specific needs of these teachers can the program be worthwhile. Induction programs are not "one size fits all."

Several considerations are important in the initial preparation of the induction program. A working knowledge of adult learning theory as well as an awareness of the influence of previous learning on adults can help to make the induction program a worthwhile experience. Consideration should also be given to the role the principal plays in the process. Often only thought of as the assessor in the process, the principal plays a vital role in helping the novice make the transition into the role of professional.

Key elements in a successful induction program should include a facilitation of the skill of reflective practice. Beginning teachers should be encouraged to discuss the work of teaching with colleagues. By doing so, the new teacher can more clearly articulate their choices, challenges, and successes as they grow as a professional. Extending their development as a professional should be a part of the induction year. A long term induction program should include some sort of model for this development.

Mentoring is a part of many induction programs. However, the *effective* use of mentors is a scarce commodity. Implementation of an induction program should not just call for mentors for new teachers but should ensure that this essential element of the induction experience is a contributing factor to the success of the new teacher. In addition, principals have control over those miscellaneous T.O.S.S. items, which can provide the new teachers an excruciating year or a year that is fruitful and efficacious for the beginner.

The goals of any induction program should include providing information to the new teacher, providing support of the new teacher in socializing to the profession, and providing opportunities for the new teacher to grow and develop as a professional. However, all too often induction programs of school systems meet the first goal and the other two goals are left out of consideration. Handing out policy manuals, disseminating insurance information, and offering other printed material is fast, easy, and low risk. Long term commitment to inducting beginning teachers into the profession is difficult at best. Nonetheless, a consideration of the impact these new teachers will have on the children that the school systems are entrusted with make this commitment one which schools are bound to fulfill.

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